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| How Do We Do It?



OK, so we've ploughed and created new friendships and contacts. We've put in place some relationship bridges in our small groups, or workplaces, or colleges or in social groups, clubs, societies. We've walked across the room and said 'hello' to some new people and broken the ice. We have ploughed some new ground for Jesus!

It's now time to sow. It's time to bring God into the conversation. It's Good News time! But what on Earth are we going to say about Heaven?!

Through much of the course so far we have been in 'course work' mode. From today onward we are going to get much more active together, actually trying out some things in the safe environment of this Evangelism Workshop. In small groups and pairs we will start to role play some scenarios which is a very powerful way of learning how we might react and respond to an opportunity to share our faith.

Don't worry - we will have some fun at the same time. Role play can really be a lot of fun. It's also a tried and tested way for real personal development to take place.

Prayer

But you know what? There is one activity which even Jesus had to do daily and without which He could not have had an effective ministry on earth. Jesus would sometimes disappear all night to spend time with His father [Luke 6:12], and I'm sure He would pray in the Spirit on all occasions [Eph 6:18], which we are also instructed to do.

I personally find Psalm 1 a great encouragement in this. We should meditate on His word 'day and night' – in other words, all the time. For me this is not a pressure point but rather a way of living such that when we think about Jesus, or the Holy Spirit or the Father God during the day, we engage with Him and share some thoughts and feelings and ask Him for wisdom to do His will and recognise opportunities to share our lives.

And what a great promise, that as we delight in Him and meditate on His word, **we will be like a fruitful tree, prospering in all things!**

1 Blessed is the man

who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.

**2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.**

**3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.**

4 Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

PSALM 1 (NIV) (My emphasis added)

Prayer, Power & Boldness

Let's look at [Acts 2](#) together, noting my headings added. This is the birth of the Church: (NIV).

ALL TOGETHER

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

PLOUGHING

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

NOT ALL WERE IMPRESSED OR OPEN

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

SOWING - WITH BOLDNESS IN THE SPIRIT

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 " 'In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
 your young men will see visions,
 your old men will dream dreams.

18 Even on my servants, both men and women,
 I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
 and they will prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in the heaven above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood and fire and billows of smoke.

20 The sun will be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood
 before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

21 And everyone who calls
 on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

" 'I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
 my body also will live in hope,

27 because you will not abandon me to the grave,
 nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
 you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a

prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

35 until I make your enemies

a footstool for your feet."

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

CONVICTION AND THEIR RESPONSE

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

GRACE MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE!

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

REAPING

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

KEEPING

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the



temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2 NIV

| The Defining Moment!

If you get busy ploughing – you will get **defining moments!**

It's when someone asks you, "So are you religious or something?". Or maybe they ask, "Why don't you swear like everyone else?". It's the moment when they feel comfortable enough with you to get a little bit personal and it's the moment when you define who you are and why you are like you are!

Arguably you have about 45 seconds to answer succinctly, before their mind wanders onto something else, or you simply blow it!

Here are some important things to **avoid** when you are in a defining moment:

1. Long-windedness
 - Don't be too long and boring, going into great detail because at last you get chance to vent your life story with Jesus...
2. Fuzziness
 - Don't chat around the houses about everything mildly linked to church and life and death and prayer and me and you and, and, and... It's good to be specific and clear.
3. Religious jargon
 - This is a challenge for us as we live in an environment where so much of what we hear and say is specific to our Christian culture. Phrases like this can simply confuse or at worst, possibly by association to less positive experiences, repulse people: "Born again", "blood of the lamb", "the Lord laid on my heart", "the Spirit said to me", "personal lord and saviour".
4. Superiority or arrogance
 - Subtly, we sometimes sound puffed up and special. It's the sense of "I'm right and you're wrong". We must ensure that the person we are speaking with is the object of our attention and care. They are not the latest evangelistic project.

So how on earth can we get this right if there are so many hurdles to cross in just speaking for about 45 seconds?

Answer: Practise!

| Your First 45 Seconds!

Please refer to Exercise 4

| Common Objections And Pitfalls

We are in dialogue with many different people from many different cultures, religions, beliefs and backgrounds. We cannot possibly have all the wisdom and life experiences to be able to answer every possible question or understand every possible scenario, or have the answers to every possible problem that we might encounter.

But that in itself is not the issue, providing we show genuine love, care and concern for people; and importantly we must not feel intimidated by not always having the answers. Being genuinely interested in someone else's story will mean that you are asking them loads of questions, really interested to find out about their experiences and beliefs. It's actually in this type of dialogue that I have found the Holy Spirit has used me the most – and sometimes I'm not even aware that He's using me until later!

I remember visiting some Christian friends of mine and they had one of their own friends around who I had never met before. I was really interested to meet them and got into a good conversation about all sorts of things. Later that day my friend called me to say that he and his wife were amazed at how the Holy Spirit had led me. Without me knowing any personal information at all about their visiting friend, the Spirit led me to speak about things that hit-home and opened up a much needed conversation between them all after I had left them. I had absolutely no idea I was being used!

OBJECTIONS or EXCUSES

Over the past 20 years I have recognised some patterns in the types of common questions and excuses that people ask and make, and it's helpful for us to consider some of these more common objections:

1. What about other religions, why is Christianity the right one?
2. Why is there so much suffering in the world if God loves people so much?
3. I will do this when I'm ready and in my own time.
4. I once knew a Christian who... [negative experience] ...why should I get involved in this.

5. I just don't believe any of this stuff.

These can be big issues for people to work through and it's impossible here to deal with each one in depth, however here are a few pointers:

I often use 1. and 2. above as a reason to introduce people to some good literature. Nicky Gumbel's book 'Searching Issues' is an excellent read for people exploring such questions. It's also a useful resource for us to read. For a friend of yours to be reading an interesting 'Christian' book and then to be discussing their findings, is an excellent approach to sharing your faith within our present culture. It gives you something to share together and a reason for ongoing dialogue.

Point 3. above is a very common objection and there are other factors to consider. Is this a genuine comment letting you know that you're going too fast for them and they need a little space to think and consider things further? If so, allow them the space and check yourself to make sure your relationship with them is strong. Think of ways to get time together in a genuine friendship, sharing a hobby or interest, going to the cinema...

However, if it's a simple excuse and you know they need to be encouraged and persuaded to make a decision, then how about beginning to explore the scriptures. I have found [Heb 4:7](#) 'today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart', and [2Cor 6:2](#) 'today is the day of your salvation' very useful. I often use these scriptures, and others, without actually turning people literally to the page. I build it into my conversation with them, talking about what the bible teaches us in a very natural way. I find this more fluid in the natural conversation we are having, enabling good eye contact and an easy flow to the conversation.

On several occasions I have gently explained it like this, "the time will never be right from your perspective, and that in a sense God is holding the clock and He loves you so much that He's standing now with open arms to fully accept you. Today can be your day".

Point 4. above is potentially more difficult and you are best to explore the past issues and continue to develop your relationship with them, so that they see a genuine concern and love in you for them. You may find it appropriate to discuss the effect that sin has on lives and how Christians are not perfect. God will give you wisdom depending on the circumstances. Remember the Roman Road from previous sessions.

Point 5. is very common, possibly evidence of them being very early in their journey, or possibly, just like I was before I was a Christian, not prepared to sound like I was in need or interested - when really I was very needy and very interested! Again, be wise and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in grace as you consider where they are really at on their personal journey of discovery.

Now let's use role play to practise a range of conversations and to be better equipped in asking interesting questions and sowing good seed.